

The Builder.

No. CXVII.

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1845.



OME difference of opinion has existed relative to a requirement of the Metropolitan Buildings Act with regard to the construction of chimneys. Schedule F provides, that every chimney and chimney-stack, except angle chimneys, "must be built from the foundation to the top thereof, without any corbelling over, whereby any upper part of the brickwork of such chimney or chimney-stack shall overhang any lower part of the brickwork on the front thereof."

Many of the district surveyors considered that this interdicted all corbelling whatsoever in chimney-stacks, and that a chimney-breast in an upper room could not be made wider than the breast below, any more than it could be made to project further from the face of the wall.

The referees have now made an award which settles the question. A joint requisition was sent by the owner and the district surveyor with regard to a third-rate dwelling-house now building in Regent's-park-terrace. It stated, "That doubts exist as to the propriety of allowing jaumbs and flues to project from party-walls upon strong stone or iron corbels bearing partly upon the jaumbs and chimney-breast underneath, in order that the chimneys of the third stories (the one-pair floor) may be placed in the centre of the rooms, there being a difference in the depth of such rooms and the rooms of the story below." According to a plan and elevation of the chimney-breasts which accompanied the requisition, one of the breasts was required to extend in width twelve or fourteen inches beyond the breast below it. The referees determined that the chimneys in the third and fourth stories (one-pair and two-pair floors), and in the front room of the fifth story, as shewn in the elevation, might either "be gathered over in the brickwork, or be set over upon sufficient iron or stone bearers in the direction of the length of the wall to which the breast is attached."

We apprehend, although not needed in the particular case laid before the referees, that the breast in the second story of a building (ground-floor) may be gathered or set over in like manner in the direction of the length of the wall, as the clause in Schedule F, already quoted, simply interdicts corbelling, "whereby any upper part of the brickwork of such chimney or chimney-stack shall overhang any lower part of the brickwork on the front thereof."

The same Schedule, in continuation, moreover, provides for corbelling over not more than nine inches from the front of the wall or stack to which the chimney shall adjoin, in certain situations: that is to say, above the ceiling of the third story (the one-pair floor, ordinarily), in buildings of the first-rate and extra first-rate; and above the ceiling of the second story (the ground-floor), in buildings of the second and third rates.

The question, What constitutes the *bona fide commencement* of a building? still occupies, occasionally, the attention of the referees. The following are the heads of two awards on the subject recently made:—

The first relates to six third-rate houses now

building for Mr. Stewart on the west side of Norland-road, Hammersmith. The district surveyor stopped the works, on the ground that the walls were insufficient in thickness, and the footings insufficient in height. The owner contended that the surveyor had nothing to do with them, as they were commenced before the 1st of January last, and called upon the referees to direct the surveyor to withdraw his notice. The surveyor stated that the houses were commenced hastily, during the latter part of December last, and were carried up four feet in height in an unworkmanlike manner, and were left exposed to the weather without any drain, so that the work had become quite ruinous; that portions had fallen, and great part of the remainder had been pulled down. He said it was not a *bona fide commencement* because the buildings appeared to be essentially different from those first projected, of better character, and were constructed in part of another material: further, that if the referees should consider it a *bona fide commencement*,—the nature of the works now in progress, comprising "the rebuilding, enlarging, and altering the same," brought them under the control of the Act. The works referred to be described as, "Generally rebuilding the external walls from the footings and facing same in part with stone ashlar: setting back the front wall to the centre house 4 inches, and laying new footing to part: increasing all the party-walls and their footings one-fourth in thickness: removing the additional buildings (which had been raised same height as the rest) in the rear of the two end houses: taking away the chimney-stacks and their footings from the external walls of the two end houses, and building two new chimneys with the party walls of the same: the two end houses are also to have an additional story, and the walls to be carried up doubtless, of an increased thickness."

The owner admitted that a considerable portion of the work, being injured by the weather, had been taken down.

The referees decided, that as the houses were duly commenced before the 1st of January, "and are now being carried on mainly in accordance with the same commencement, so as to evidence that the same was a *bona fide commencement*, the alterations stated are not such as to bring the said houses within the operation of the provisions of the said Act so far as relates to the original building of the said houses."

As it was a case of "reasonable doubt," they awarded that the expenses (3*l*. 9*s*. 2*d*.) should be paid by the parties in equal moieties.

The other case was in the Paddington district. The owner gave notice to the surveyor, November 27, 1844, of his intention to erect two second-rate dwelling-houses. He had previously prepared a concrete foundation, and ultimately completed the footings before the 1st of January last. The surveyor taking a particular view of a letter sent by the referees to Mr. Allen, of Rotherhithe, in January (see *BUILDER*, p. 37, *ante*), concluded that footings only did not constitute commencement, and called on the owner to give a fresh notice. The owner, it should be said, had contracted with a bricklayer for the erection of the houses before he gave the first notice: and the surveyor did not doubt his "good faith."

The referees decided that as the footings "were completely formed and executed in a regular and workmanlike manner, such buildings must be deemed to have been commenced before the 1st day of January, 1845,

and to be 'already built' buildings within the meaning of the said Act, and not within the operation of the provisions thereof, so far as they relate to the original building of such buildings."

It was awarded that the expenses (3*l*. 9*s*. 4*d*.) should be paid by the parties in equal moieties.

In reply to the inquiry of some correspondents, whether or not projections from external walls formed of timber and covered externally with incombustible materials would be conformable to the Act, we can mention that the referees have decided in the negative, in the case of a water-closet projecting from the back wall of a house in Dover-street, Piccadilly. The materials proposed to be used and declared inefficient,—were, timber framing and a covering of galvanized iron.

INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS.

On Monday, the 28th ult., a meeting of the Institute was held at their rooms in Grosvenor-street, Mr. H. E. Kendall in the chair.

Amongst the donations announced, were designs for churches and parsonage houses, published by the Prussian government, a work on the Greek Theatre, by Herr Strack, and ten guineas from Mr. Donaldson towards the library fund.

Mr. Fowler, who was the bearer of the German works, made some remarks on the buildings in progress in Berlin. Amongst the most important was an addition to the National Museum, whereof the construction was peculiar. The building is fire-proof, and displays a union of great lightness and great strength. In digging for the foundation they reached a stratum of infusorial earth, and this was made into cones and pots, with which to form the ceilings. The modern Gothic at Berlin he considered bad; in all other styles the buildings there were very satisfactory. The munificence of the government contrasted strongly with the parsimony exhibited in England.

Mr. James Thompson read a paper on the hagio-scope and other parts of the chancel of Alderton Church, ten or twelve miles from Malmesbury, Wilts; but as we shall probably print the paper entire, we refrain from any notice of it here. A conversation on the uses of hagio-scopes, or squints, took place, wherein Messrs. Scoles, Richardson, Godwin, and others joined.

Mr. F. J. Francis then laid before the meeting some remarks on encaustic tiles; and, after tracing the history of their manufacture in the East, Greece, Italy, and our own country, commented on symbolism, and found fault very properly with some of the absurdities in Durandus.

Earl de Grey, the president, has invited the members to a conversation on Friday, the 9th inst. The council will have the honour of dining with his lordship previously.

CAMBRIDGE CAMDEN SOCIETY.—Sir William Follett and Professor Starkie have given an opinion in reply to a case submitted to them, that the dissolution of the Society cannot be effected except by the unanimous and expressed assent of all the members! As this is not likely to be obtained, the committee will be prepared to submit resolutions at the anniversary meeting on the 2th inst., to enable the society "to continue to subsist in the spirit of its original constitution, and consistently with duty, usefulness, and honour." Blank forms have been sent to all the members in order to obtain their opinion, but it seems quite certain that dissolution will not take place.